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# GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING PROJECT (*GSP/TAQADUM*)

## ANNUAL REPORT ON LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES (2015)

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# GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING *PROJECT* (*GSP/TAQADUM*)

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**July 2016**

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## ACRONYMS

<b>COMSEC</b>	Council of Ministers Secretariat
<b>COR</b>	Council of Representatives
<b>FAD</b>	Financial Affairs Department
<b>DG</b>	Director General
<b>DMAT</b>	Decentralization Mapping and Analysis Tool
<b>ESDO</b>	Essential Service Delivery Oversight
<b>FAD</b>	Financial Affairs Department
<b>GO</b>	Governor's Office
<b>GOI</b>	Government of Iraq
<b>GSP</b>	Governance Strengthening <i>Project</i>
<b>GSP/Taqadum</b>	Governance Strengthening <i>Project</i> /Taqadum
<b>HCCP</b>	High Commission for Coordination between Provinces
<b>HCCPSEC</b>	High Commission for Coordination between Provinces' Secretariat
<b>ICI</b>	Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation
<b>ICIP</b>	Intergovernmental Coordination Implementation Plan
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IDS</b>	Iraq Development and Sustainability
<b>ISIL</b>	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>Law 21</b>	Provincial Powers Act (2008) or "Transfer of Functions" Law, calling for decentralization of the government and the transfer of suitable ministerial "functions" to the provincial governments
<b>LT</b>	Long-term
<b>MCHPM</b>	Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Public Municipalities
<b>MMPW</b>	Ministry of Municipalities & Public Work
<b>MOCH</b>	Ministry of Construction and Housing
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
<b>MOP</b>	Ministry of Planning
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum Of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OD</b>	Organizational Development
<b>PC</b>	Provincial Council
<b>PM</b>	Prime Minister
<b>PMAC</b>	Prime Minister's Advisory Council
<b>PPDC</b>	Provincial Planning and Development Councils

<b>PPL</b>	Provincial Powers Law
<b>SC</b>	Sectoral Subcommittee
<b>SD</b>	Service Delivery
<b>SDI</b>	Service Delivery Improvement
<b>SDIP</b>	Service Delivery Improvement Plan
<b>SDIPIC</b>	Service Delivery Improvement Plan Implementation Committee
<b>SDIPDC</b>	Service Delivery Improvement Plan Development Committee
<b>SDPS</b>	Service Delivery Performance Standards
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SOW</b>	Scope of Work
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>ST</b>	Short-term
<b>STTA</b>	Short-term Technical Assistance
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>Taqadum</b>	Arabic for “moving forward”
<b>TF</b>	Provincial Task Force
<b>TOT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>TSI</b>	Technical Support to Iraq (Program)
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
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<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

# I. INTRODUCTION

As per Section F.7.A. (d), Chemonics provides its **Annual Report on Lessons Learned and Best Practices** for the Governance Strengthening Project - “Taquadum” (*GSP/Taquadum*), under Contract No. AID-267-C-11-00006. This document reflects on lessons learned in the previous year of Project implementation and provides information and insight explaining why the proposed course of action in the consecutive annual work-plan is justifiable.

The goal of this document is to capture best practices developed by *GSP/Taquadum* over the course of the fourth year of implementation, from October 2014 to September 2015. Programming in a conflict environment results in special challenges, and *GSP/Taquadum* adapted to address these challenges with a number of innovative approaches. In an effort to address two distinct but overlapping spheres of activity, this document is divided into two parts: 1) best practices related to the implementation of program activities and 2) best practices for overall Project management.

## II. BACKGROUND

In September 2011, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched *GSP/Taquadum*. *GSP/Taquadum* is designed to enable provincial and local governments to respond more effectively to community needs. The Project has two components:

**Component I:** *Institutional Strengthening. Institutionalize provincial and local governments' core authorities and responsibilities.*

**Component II:** *Executive Oversight. Provincial and local elected officials hold executive ministries accountable for improved services.*

Under each component, *GSP/Taquadum* promotes provincial and local government institutional development to build constructive provincial council and governor office capacity and oversight mechanisms. Activities are Iraqi-led, supporting government and civil society efforts to strengthen the responsiveness of provincial and local governments to community needs.

As of July 1, 2014, *GSP/Taquadum* shifted its objective to focus on the administrative decentralization of three out of eight ministries slated for decentralization – Health, Education, and Municipalities and Public Works – and working with five targeted provinces (Baghdad, Babil, Najaf, Diwaniyah, and Wasit). With its new mandate to prepare for the scheduled August 2015 devolution of powers from Iraq's central ministries to provincial governments, Governorates were primed to accept the authority and embrace the responsibility of improving public services for citizens. *GSP/Taquadum* management and leading technical team members moved early on to prepare themselves for the task ahead, identifying staff resources and adjusting their respective departmental plans as needed. Two additional provinces – Diyala and Kirkuk – were added to *GSP/Taquadum's* work plan as of October 2014. As of June 1, 2015, the rest of the 15 remaining provinces were added to *GSP/Taquadum's* work plan.



### III. DEFINITIONS

Within the context and comprehension of this report, *Best Practices* refers to a systematic procedure that yields results superior to those achieved by other means; and *Lessons Learned* is knowledge gained through experience, which when shared, benefits the work of others. The lessons learned can be either a good experience to follow or a bad experience to avoid.

## IV. OVERALL TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

### A. PROJECT DESIGN

*GSP/Taqadum's* Project design and approach for Year 4 underwent major changes when two provinces (Diyala and Kirkuk) then the remaining eight provinces (Basrah, Maysan, DhiQar, Muthanna, Karbala, Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah ad Din) were added to the original roster of five that *GSP/Taqadum's* work plan targeted for the development of Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement Plans (ICIPs) and Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs). The new work plan incorporated the implementation of ICIPs and the transfer of functions from the three ministries to the provinces in addition to getting consensus on the ICIP developed in cooperation with the five provinces where ICIPs had been developed to include all 15 provinces. *GSP/Taqadum* put forward a road map mechanism to facilitate the transfer of functions to the provinces to include the development of organizational charts for each governorate and roles and responsibilities of the Governor's Office (GO), Provincial Council (PC) and directorates. The *Project* was also tasked with identifying the laws and regulations that are in conflict with law 21 as amended, and helping to establish a financial affairs directorate and local revenue generation units. In addition, the new work plan calls for the implementation of short-term solutions listed in the service delivery improvement plans to improve service delivery.

### B. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

#### PROJECT STAFF

In Year 4, *GSP/Taqadum* re-established embedded offices in 12 out of the 15 Iraqi provinces, with the exception of Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa due to continuing operations against ISIL.

*GSP/Taqadum* continued its effort to strengthen the relationships that were established with Iraqi officials in all 15 provinces. The embedded offices allow *GSP/Taqadum* embedded teams to work side-by-side with PC, GO, and directorates staff from the three ministries on a daily basis to facilitate easier access to key officials. This has contributed to strengthening the trusting relationship that *GSP/Taqadum* enjoys within the provinces. Regarding the three northern provinces, *GSP/Taqadum* had to tailor efforts due to the ongoing occupation by the terrorist forces of ISIL by meeting regularly with a provincial representative either remotely or in locations outside the respective provinces.

*GSP/Taqadum* uses a matrix of organizational structure to provide the flexibility to adapt to the dynamic operating context of Iraq while maintaining geographic reach and technical depth. Each technical specialist within an embedded provincial team directly reports to an embedded provincial coordinator and receives technical directions, training, materials, action plans, and follow-up from a *GSP/Taqadum* national lead specialist. Each embedded team receives management and operational support from a hub. The *Project* has hubs in Baghdad, Hilla, and Erbil. This kind of matrix setup also

reduces dependence upon individual team members, minimizing the impact of employee turnover, enabling the *Project* to focus resources where they are needed and adjust the mix of resources and activities according to technical needs.

The *Project* national lead technical specialists consist of lead subject matter experts in all program activities, such as administrative, legal, financial, and service delivery sectors, and ministry liaison efforts. Regional managers, based in *GSP/Taqadum*'s hubs in Baghdad and Hilla oversee the work of *GSP/Taqadum*'s provincial teams. Baghdad hub regional managers oversee the central and the northern province (Baghdad, Diyala, Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah ad Din) activities, and the Hilla hub regional manager oversees the southcentral and southern province (Babil, Najaf, Karbala, Wasit, Diwaniya, Muthana, DhiQar, Maysan, and Basrah) activities. The operating hubs provide technical support and guidance to the embedded teams in the provinces and provide management oversight of the hubs and play a coordinating role to ensure efficient and effective deployment of resources and program activities. In the provinces, the embedded teams are comprised of a regional coordinator who leads a team of specialists that has been assigned to meet the provincial government's capacity building and technical assistance needs.

Another tool and resource that has proven especially effective is engaging and leveraging the resources and input of Chemonics' home office based team. *GSP/Taqadum* has developed a robust system for coordination between the Washington, DC-based home office and field office leadership. This includes daily emails and a weekly Skype call in addition to ad hoc phone calls.

## **LONG AND SHORT TERM EXPATRIATE POSITIONS**

Living conditions in Baghdad are contained, security concerns create unprovoked stress, and other challenges make this a unique operating environment that does not necessarily work well for all individuals. During its fourth year of implementation, *GSP/Taqadum* continued to implement a dynamic recruitment and hiring approach reflective of the operating environment in Iraq that allows international staff to manage the challenges of transitioning to the *Project*. All staff are provided with information about life on the Baghdad compound and are given access to resources to support mental and physical well-being as part of *GSP/Taqadum*'s onboarding process. Additionally, the emphasis was placed on hiring staff that have experience living in compounds or have fluency in Arabic as it allows for a more smooth adjustment period.

After ISIL took over three provinces in Iraq in 2014, all expats moved out of Baghdad to relocate permanently in Erbil. The chief of party and all expatriates are working from Erbil hub with frequent visits to Baghdad to run program's activities. The COP provides overall technical direction and management in coordination with USAID/Iraq.

*GSP/Taqadum* has used international short-term technical advisors who bring significant knowledge supporting local governance in challenging operating environments. These advisors came with a wide knowledge and expertise in different program activities such as financial, organizational development and post-conflict monitoring and assessment. During Year 4, most of the advisors worked out of Erbil.

## STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS

The importance of building and maintaining professional relationships cannot be overstated. While Skype, mobile phones, and email are necessary forms of communication, nothing replaces face-to-face meetings. Regular in-person meetings are critical and are prioritized even when they are logistically burdensome or time-consuming, particularly when new initiatives are being designed, or the *Project* is expanding to a new area, and stakeholder feedback on needs and *Project* performance is essential for success.

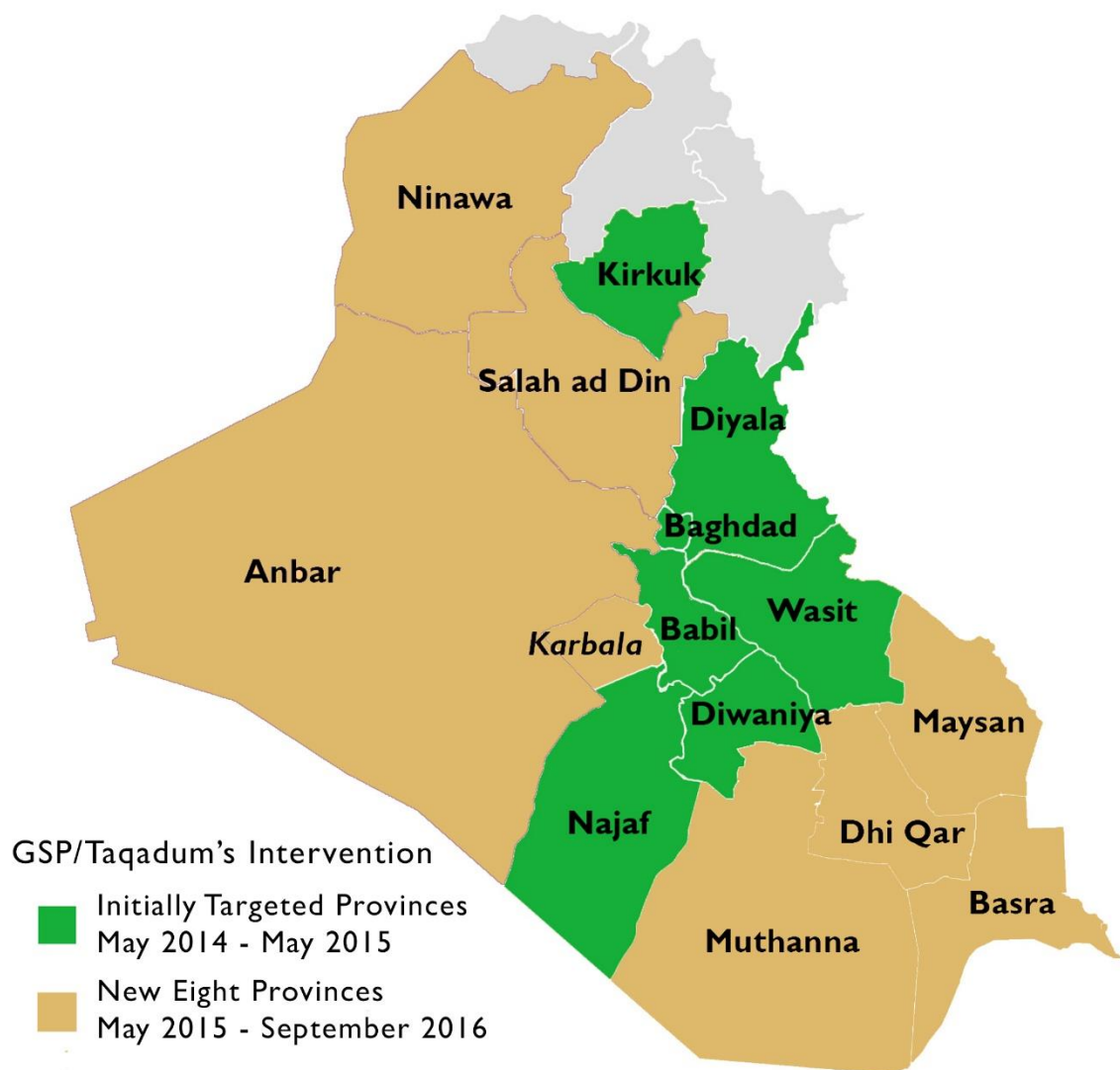
*GSP/Taqadum* makes a concerted effort to schedule regular, face-to-face meetings with its stakeholders. Similarly, *GSP/Taqadum*'s embedded approach to its technical scope has created a highly communicative relationship with its stakeholders in various Iraqi GOs and PCs. The *Project*'s embedded provincial teams work side-by-side with their government counterparts, thereby facilitating technical as well as administrative dialogue. Provincial teams then relay recommendations they receive from interacting with PC and GO personnel on a daily basis to *GSP/Taqadum*'s hubs.

*GSP/Taqadum* provides personalized and on-demand program interventions. The COP regularly meets with many national and provincial leaders. Provincial coordinators and regional managers drive the ongoing relationships and work to maintain stakeholder buy-in and commitment as technical work progresses. In addition, *GSP/Taqadum* continues to coordinate with other governance and capacity building implementers, such as the World Bank, DFID, Canadian-funded implementers, UNDP, and UK-Based Global Partners.

## RISK MITIGATION

The Iraq security situation especially after ISIL took over the three provinces, presents challenges to *GSP/Taqadum*. The move of expatriate staff to Erbil who manage activities remotely with frequent visits to Baghdad has been successful in implementing program activities while minimizing the risk. *GSP/Taqadum* has learned several critical lessons that enabled a more efficient security platform and maximized technical assistance activities. Open and clear communication between all levels of security personnel and *Project* staff is the core of a robust security platform. While this may be intuitive, *GSP/Taqadum* found that developing the right vehicle for open communication between all parties was critical to the success of the *Project*. Pre- and post-deployment briefings for new expatriate and short term staff set expectations for life and work in Iraq and developed an understanding of the security platform, allowing for an easier transition to the new operating environment and more efficient programming. Close coordination of initiatives with the security provider and the home office team has also enabled *GSP/Taqadum* to redistribute additional resources for the most critical needs while still providing the necessary level of support for the rest of the *Project*.

## GSP/TAQADUM INTERVENTION



## V. IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

### TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES THAT LED TO BEST PRACTICES

#### ICIP AND SDIP DEVELOPMENT

During Year 4, we began expanding the decentralization mandate to other provinces. Ten more provinces were added to the original list of five, when the change to the original scope began in July 2014. The addition of the ten was split into two stages. The first one took place on September 28, 2014, with the addition of two provinces (Diyala and Kirkuk) and the second one took place on May 22, 2015 (Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Muthanna, Karbala, Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa). Our work plan outlines working with three of the eight ministries mentioned in Law 21 as amended (Health, Education, and Municipalities and Public Work). Similar to the original five provinces, *GSP/Taqadum* staff has used the same approach with the remaining ten.

The *Project's* general approach is to help provinces prepare an effective transition plan for the transfer of ministerial functions to provinces and take steps for developing a service delivery improvement plan, given the decentralization challenges and legal, financial, and administrative opportunities. The *Project* prepared its decentralization mapping and analysis plans (DMAPs), rolling them out to stakeholders, and seeking consensus on next steps. The DMAPs identified, analyzed, and determined transferable ministerial functions. In addition, the *Project* has used the Gap Analysis Tool (GAT) to identify the elements most affecting the services and rank them according to their effect. The newly added provinces were paired with the original five. This pairing – just one aspect of the *Project* comprehensive and unified Intergovernmental Coordination Improvement Plan (ICIP) aimed at replicating the *Project* results in these added provinces – fosters cross-province exchanges of ideas, knowledge, tools, methods, practices, and suggestions.

#### REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

*GSP/Taqadum* has exposed our counterparts within the Iraqi local and central governments to real world examples of similar decentralization experiences. We conducted a study tour in Indonesia to get acquainted with Indonesia's experience in implementing decentralization. Iraqi officials visited facilities and conducted meetings with Indonesian officials from different ministries to be familiar with mechanisms, structures and processes adopted in shifting to decentralization in order to promote decentralization efforts. Participants learned that Indonesian local governments have become more responsive to citizen needs and brought public decision making closer to people. They also found that provinces become economically active and are competing with each other.

#### CUSTOMIZED TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Several capacity development events and hands-on workshops took place in the provinces, regionally, and nationally. By the end of Year 4, *GSP/Taqadum* successfully met its objective by bringing all provinces up to date on all aspects of *GSP/Taqadum's* efforts and goals.

*GSP/Taqadum* provided customized training and technical assistance to governmental individuals from 15 targeted governorates, including directorate officials on their roles and responsibilities under Law 21 and its second amendment and began the process to reach an agreement between central and provincial governments on which functions to be transferred immediately, after six months, and



longer periods depending on capacity needs and other legal restrictions for the three targeted ministries of Health, Education, and Ministry of Municipalities & Public Work (MMPW).

To expedite development of ICIP in the five new southern targeted provinces plus the three ISIL-controlled provinces, *GSP/Taqadum* used a mobile team to start working with officials in each province to fast-track phases that were used with the original five provinces. A mobile team from national technical staff and the south central region visited Karbala, Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Basrah developing the capacity of the embedded staff in these provinces as well. *GSP/Taqadum* staff in the central region did the same in the three ISIL-controlled provinces Anbar, Ninewa, and Salah Ad Din for the development of ICIPs.

### **DECENTRALIZATION MAPPING ANALYSIS PLAN (DMAP)**

The DMAP is the core of intergovernmental coordination process, and it is supported by financial, administrative, and legal frameworks. The DMAP was created by *GSP/Taqadum* to identify, analyze, and help determine transferable ministerial functions. The DMAPs for all sectors under the three targeted ministries were submitted to the High Commission for Coordination between Provinces (HCCP) by the provinces in 2015.

Developing the DMAP is a systematic and scientific methodology on how to identify, analyze, and determine transferable ministerial functions based on certain criteria and use capacity elements to determine the gradual transfer of the functions; immediately, after six months, a year or longer. This resulted in making the local governments replicate this system with other non-targeted ministries by *GSP/Taqadum*.

### **MINISTRY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION**

Leveraging technical expertise, decades of shared experience, and a deep commitment to support Iraq's decentralization process in ways that are best for the country and its citizens, our overall goal was and remains, to prepare plans whereby Article 45 of Law 21, as amended, (also known as the Provincial Powers Act (2008) or "Transfer of Functions" Law), is implemented. Achieving this goal includes building the capacity of the provincial directorates and Governor's Offices to receive and perform the functions transferred efficiently and effectively.

After outlining the functional mapping and analysis approach and efforts to bring ministries and provinces together to build consensus on the transfer of functions, local governments took control of governing their provinces. The MMPW agreed with provinces on all devolved and retained functions with the exception of four disputed functions.

*GSP/Taqadum* provided technical assistance to facilitate a seamless transition of ministry functions to the provinces that are fully equipped with the capacity and knowledge to provide better services.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK**

*GSP/Taqadum* is providing hands-on "learning-by-doing" capacity development. *GSP/Taqadum* managed to train PC, GO, and Directorates of three ministries (Health, Education, and MMPW) on process mapping the functions that involve citizen-centered services. *GSP/Taqadum* managed to have provinces map out 50 functions through the end of September 2015, and many more are underway. To avoid duplication and leverage resources, each directorate will be assigned specific functions and then share the results of their process mapping and streamlining efforts with other provinces.

Citizen-centered functions will be given priority. The process map will be posted on the provincial government website to allow citizens to have access to information.

## **FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK**

*GSP/Taqadum* has been assisting the governments in establishing revenue generation systems. *GSP/Taqadum* trains provincial governments on the guiding principles, structures, and collection mechanisms for user fees and other revenue collection; including taking steps to create an enabling legal environment to facilitate direct payments, and conducting public surveys to determine constituents' willingness to pay for clearly identified services. During Year 4, a total of four GOs established Local Revenue Units (LRU). This unit is responsible for local revenue generation and collection.

Also, *GSP/Taqadum* is developing a capital budgeting process to meet community needs. This process is institutionalized through PC mandates allowing for citizen input into the decision-making process and holding the provincial government accountable for operating and capital budgets.

*GSP/Taqadum* assisted provinces in setting up the Provincial Financial Affairs Directorate (FAD) through establishing two units: one for budgeting and the other for accounting, which will be technically accountable to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) (compliance with rules and regulations, reporting, and audit) and administratively to the GO. During Year 4, 11 GOs established FADs. At the same time, the treasury division of the proposed directorate provides the same functions as before to the other line ministries that are not subject to decentralization. The establishment and functioning of the FAD will enhance financial reporting, monitoring and auditing processes, all of which will ultimately provide better local financial management and accountability systems.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

*GSP/Taqadum* succeeded to build consensus among 10 governorates to draft amendments to 35 conflicting laws with decentralization (including 131 articles) and have PCs, and/or GOs send official letters to the COM and/or the COR during FY2015. In addition, *GSP/Taqadum* assisted the GOs and directorates in defining their roles, responsibilities, authorities, and working relations through on-the-job training and institutionalizing it through written policy. Ultimately, *GSP/Taqadum* will assist national and provincial governments with both executive and legislative branches to develop and institutionalize through local legislation the monitoring roles, responsibilities, and accountability framework among them.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) were developed in the targeted five provinces then Diyala and Kirkuk were added addressing service delivery in water, sewer, municipality, and primary health care and primary schools sectors. Each plan is unique to its respective province and sector, and the provincial directorates submitted their SDIPs to their respective governors and councils that adopted them. A total of 638 short-term improvement actions were recommended: 124 (health), 119 (education) and 395 (municipality). Additionally, 575 long-term improvement actions were listed: 115 (health), 113 (education) and 347 (municipality). These solutions are recommended to fill the gaps of services indicators that were identified in the SDIPs of each province. The formation of SDIP Implementation Committees (SDIPICs) in the seven targeted provinces contributed greatly to the development of action plans aimed at implementing the short-term solutions cited in the SDIPs. All provincial SDIPICs completed their respective action plans and had begun to implement their short-term solutions. Efforts were exerted to develop a higher level of intergovernmental cooperation in

implementing the SDIPs in these seven provinces. *GSP/Taqadum* managed to have the targeted governments implement the short-term solutions approved by the local governments and directorates of the seven provinces: Wasit, Najaf, Kirkuk, Diyala, Diwaniyah, Baghdad, and Babil.

*GSP/Taqadum* began efforts to replicate its service delivery process (previously completed at the beginning of FY2015 with the seven initially targeted provinces in the newly added five southern and south-central provinces of Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan, Muthanna, and Karbala. All information gleaned from *GSP/Taqadum*'s efforts with the seven initially targeted provinces were shared in the hope the newly targeted provinces would emulate those efforts.

Five SDIPDCs were established in the five southern provinces. In addition, five liaison staff members were named by each directorate of water, sewage, municipality, education, and health in these five provinces, and *GSP/Taqadum* trained the committees to begin development of the SDIPs with the assistance of governor-assigned coordinators for each sector.

Due to *Project* resource constraints, the staff resources in the newly targeted five provinces paired up with staff in one of the adjacent initially targeted provinces. The newly targeted provinces are supported by a mobile team of the *Project*'s national staff on an "as needed" basis.

The expectation is that this process of developing SDIPs will be replicated in the three ISIL-controlled provinces on the development of SDIPs. In Year 4, *GSP/Taqadum* trained these three provinces on post-conflict essential public service restoration, including overall post-conflict disaster management (steps, processes, assessments, prioritizing, etc.); determining the level of hazard vulnerability assessments; creating a "laundry list" of critical infrastructure sites in each province; and selecting a disaster management team.

Three management crisis cells were created in the three ISIL-controlled provinces and their members trained on post-conflict measures. *GSP/Taqadum* conducted workshops on the subject of post-conflict disaster management in September 2015. The main objective was to build the capacity of these governorates to effectively respond to the urgent needs of their afflicted citizens after ISIL. Part of the output of these training sessions was coming up with a preliminary plan to assist the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) after ISIL. This preliminary plan will be reviewed and refined by an international expert to be ready for execution. The plan is a four-stage strategy starting with Readiness, Immediate Response, Transition, and ending with Stability & Sustainability stages.

## VI. LESSONS LEARNED

### A. STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

*GSP/Taqadum* continued to deepen further relationships with central and provincial government officials including the Council of Minister's Secretariat (COMSEC), the Ministry of State for Governorate Affairs (MOSGA), the High Commission for Coordination between Provinces' Secretariat (HCCPSEC), the Prime Minister's Advisory Council (PMAC), the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Work (MMPW), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Health (MOH), Governors and Provincial Councils in the 15 provinces.

*GSP/Taqadum* has continued cultivating relationships among the highest level of government to build support and consensus for the decentralization road map recommendations of the January 2014

Decentralization Conference. Furthermore, *GSP/Taqadum* got the support for the decentralization action plan and the eventual transfer of functions to the local government. Changing the mindset of stakeholders is a protracted process that can only be accomplished through multiple interventions. The barriers differ in each province and therefore, maintaining a good understanding of the context in each of the provinces is essential to optimizing *Project* impact. The barriers toward decentralization were more pronounced by the ministries of health and education.

*GSP/Taqadum* management has learned that involving a greater number of stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes will improve stakeholder buy-in. A key element to stakeholder buy-in is the willingness to participate in the technical assistance provided by *GSP/Taqadum*. However, *GSP/Taqadum* has also learned that when senior level buy-in for *GSP/Taqadum*'s activities is obtained from Provincial Councils or Governors, their staff is more willing to apply the practical skills provided by *GSP/Taqadum*.

## **B. TRANSFERABLE KNOWLEDGE**

*GSP/Taqadum* management has learned that “learning by doing” by national and embedded technical specialists substantially improves the effectiveness of training activities by providing continual support that enables participants to implement lessons learned on the job.

For efficiency and effectiveness, common issues are addressed in regional or national hands-on workshops. *GSP/Taqadum* is ensuring that Government of Iraq counterparts are equipped with the tools to identify and solve problems in the long term, not just when *GSP/Taqadum* is present. *GSP/Taqadum* is developing financial and administrative structural changes that endure as government actors change from the central ministries to the provinces. The exchange of information among local government creates higher levels of organizational understanding and greater consensus towards common issues. *GSP/Taqadum* has learned that data sharing strategies from different provinces will help in obtaining consensus and provides a unified view for task force members and sub-committees. Local governments became more independent and developed more confidence in delivering better services to their people

## **C. MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM**

*GSP/Taqadum* has designed the *Project* implementation phase by using the “bottom-up approach.” Working with governorates through *GSP/Taqadum* embedded offices, we have built consensus among provinces developing a unified vision for the consolidated ICIP. This built support among the provinces to have a unified view in preparation of the August deadline for decentralization. *GSP/Taqadum* has throughout the process lead from behind offering guidance on how the functions will work under the new decentralized system.

## **D. CROSS-POLLINATION**

*GSP/Taqadum* has established linkages between stakeholders by taking a proactive approach linking officials from different provinces and the central government. *GSP/Taqadum* has facilitated roundtable discussions toward establishing a mutual understanding on key issues and improving communication and coordination to resolve differences between provinces and the targeted ministries. These meetings have helped all stakeholders agree on the number of functions to be transferred from the three ministries to the provinces. In addition, *GSP/Taqadum* aims to scale the lessons learned from one province to Iraq's

remaining provinces. This has helped deepen the ties among provinces, encourage officials to learn from one another and identify common challenges. Finding those challenges will enable officials to understand what it will take to confront them, a key element to effective consensus building and lobbying at the national level.

## **E. GOOD ANALYTICAL TOOL**

*GSP/Taqadum* has used a comprehensive approach with well-thought criteria and analysis methodologies to map out functional responsibilities. Provinces and central government have valued *GSP/Taqadum*' scientific approach when analyzing the ability of the provinces to receive central ministerial functions through the use of the Decentralization Mapping and Analysis Tool.

## **F. MEASURING SYSTEM FOR A BETTER MANAGEMENT**

The *Project* has been successful in its application and impact of service delivery performance standards as evidenced by the remedial actions outlined in the short and long term solutions within SDIPs to improve services. In some provinces, this scientific approach of calculating performance standards and indicator values will be used as the basis for preparing the annual investment budget.

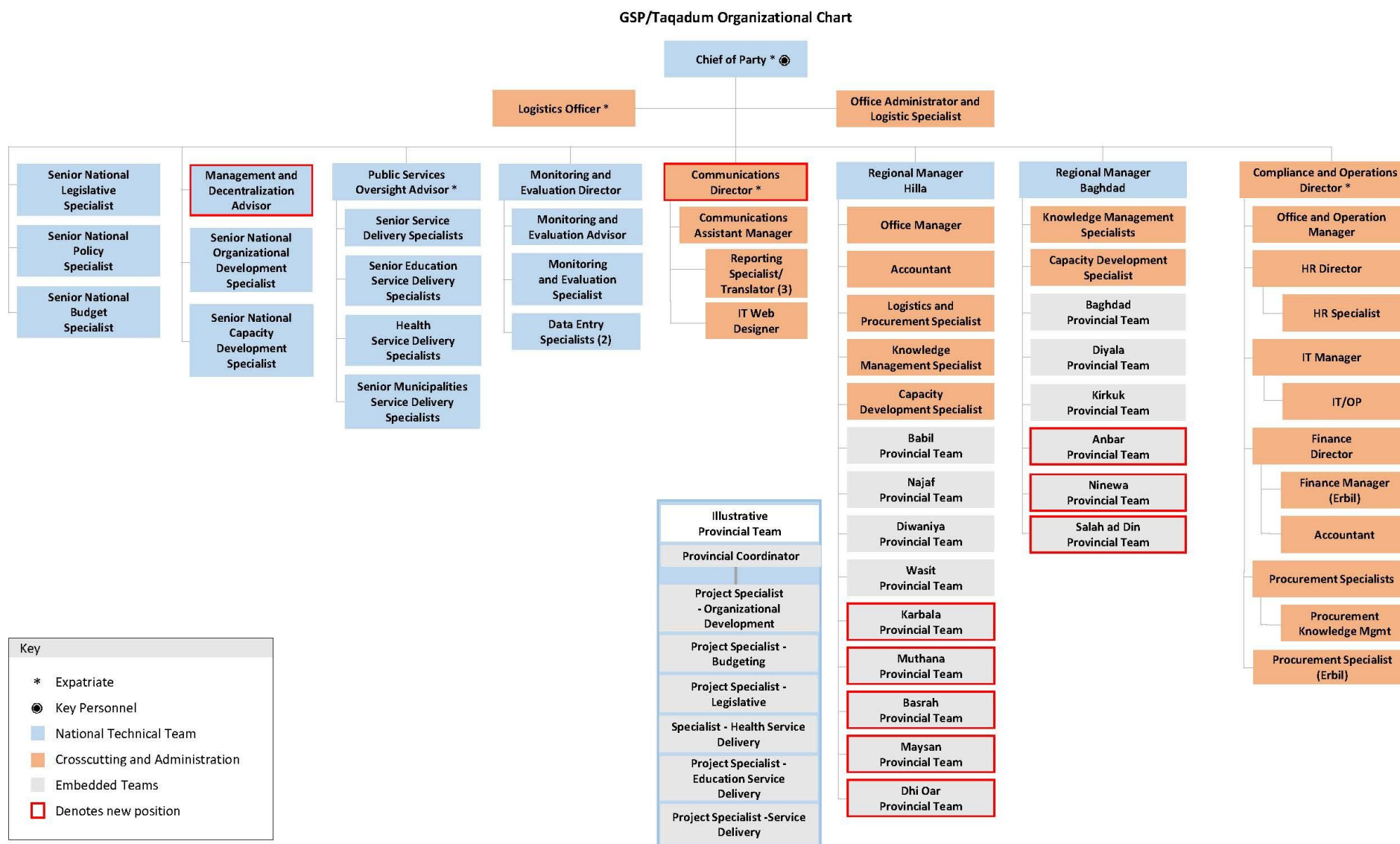
## **VII. LOOKING AHEAD**

There is no doubt that interest in *GSP/Taqadum*'s decentralization approach is growing across Iraq to include the other non-target ministries. The overall goal has been and remains, to prepare plans whereby article 45 of law 21 as amended, is implemented. With the August 5 decentralization deadline behind us, Iraq's provinces are on their way to receiving functions transferred from the ministries and manage and deliver services to their people. In addition, they will legislate local laws and prepare and execute operation and investment budgets that take into consideration their local needs regarding citizen-centered services and economic development.

*GSP/Taqadum* will continue to guide the GOs, PCs, and directorates. One of *GSP/Taqadum*'s roles will be to facilitate the defining and development of management roles, responsibilities, authorities, and relationship between the GO and PC and the GO and the directorates. *GSP/Taqadum* will work on preparing a mechanism for the transfer of functions and assets from the three targeted ministries to the provinces. *GSP/Taqadum* will continue to develop the capacity of local governments to be ready to receive the transferred functions and authorities. *GSP/Taqadum* will continue to define the new roles of the ministries that will be changed from controlling to enabling, from policy and strategic decision making to developing the capacity of local governments. In addition, *GSP/Taqadum* continues its technical assistance activities with a staff of local governorates.



## ANNEX A: GSP/TAQADUM ORGANIZATION CHART



## ANNEX B: GSP/TAQADUM SUCCESS STORIES



### SUCCESS STORY

#### Implementation of GSP/Taqadum's Local Financial Management Module Spreads Throughout Targeted Provinces

Earlier this year, on February, 25-26 2015, *GSP/Taqadum* hosted a national workshop to showcase and discuss the *project's* proposed Local Financial Management Module working paper. Among participants were provincial officials and representatives from the ministries of Health and Education, Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, Ministry of State for Governorates' Affairs (MOSGA) and Council of Ministers' Secretariat (COMSEC).

Developed in cooperation with targeted provinces, the Module was created with the intent to improve financial administration within provincial governments and present the following: 1) an organizational structure and associated responsibilities of a provincial Financial Affairs Department (FAD) in each of the 12 targeted provinces; 2) financing procedures between such a department and provincial directorates; 3) provincial budgeting preparation; and 4) auditing and internal controls. The goal of February's workshop was to demonstrate to attendees the significance attached to creating the FAD – small local treasury departments – to strengthen local government capacity in order to provide better services to citizens and achieve financial autonomy.

Overwhelmingly supported, the contents of the Module were unanimously approved by participants, as was the proposal to create FADs in each province. However, due to several perceived conflicts of interest between the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the provinces, the contents of the Module did not receive MOF's approval until August 2015.

Immediately after this approval, many provinces, in cooperation with *GSP/Taqadum*, began the process to establish FADs within their Governorate Offices (GOs) where they will serve as provincial financial management agencies and assume responsibility for all provincial financial functions.

Once in place, each of the proposed FADs will contain two sections: 1) Budgeting – responsible for planning and formulation of the general provincial budget; tracking changes that may occur in budget items; and tracking changes in staffing; and 2) Accounting – responsible for financing all devolved directorates within the province on monthly basis; tracking spending within budget allocations for each directorate; and generating monthly provincial trial balances for submission to the MOF.

Understanding the importance of local revenue generation to support, *GSP/Taqadum's* financial management module also calls for the establishment of Local Revenue Units (LRUs) within each provincial Governor's Office. The LRUs will be responsible for collecting, reporting and financial management of local revenues. Several provinces have begun to establish these units and *GSP/Taqadum* budgeting specialists are currently providing them with technical assistance on identifying roles and responsibilities, as well as formulation of staff job descriptions.

To date, eight provinces – Babil, Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Diyala, Kirkuk, Muhthanna , and Ninawa – have established FADs. Four of them – Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Diyala and Kirkuk – have created LRUs.





## SUCCESS STORY

### Diwaniyah's Rural Areas Receiving Medical Services Thanks to *GSP/Taqadum's* SDIP Initiative



*Healthcare workers providing vaccinations to children as part of one of Diwaniyah's Directorate of Health's short-term SDIPs, developed in cooperation with GSP/Taqadum, to bring primary health care services to rural communities and conduct health awareness-raising campaigns.*

***"The SDIP, developed in cooperation with GSP/Taqadum, has offered us the opportunity to use our available resources to extend our health services to many remote areas which would not have been able get these primary health services for a minimum of five years," said Diwaniyah's Health Directorate's Follow-up section manager, Dr. Betool Ali Atiya, a very active participant in this campaign.***

With 943 villages spread all over the province and its heavily agricultural focus, Diwaniyah is one of Iraq's most rural provinces. Most of these villages, like Ghamas, Fadiliya and Sadr Al-Daghara, are highly populated and lack adequate health care centers. Existing health clinics are small, understaffed and lack specialized doctors and the necessary equipment and medicine to treat the population.

Diwaniyah's Directorate of Health, in cooperation with *GSP/Taqadum*, developed a Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) for primary healthcare, which includes short- and long-term solutions to be implemented within a specific timeline.

One of these short-term solutions aimed to conduct health campaigns in remote rural villages using mobile health clinics. The Directorate General of Health identified criteria for selecting high risk areas, i.e., those that suffer from a lack of clean water, do not have a sewage system, are unserved as far as solid waste disposal system pick up, and areas that are five or more kilometers from the nearest health clinic.

Starting the first in a series, on August 25, the campaign began visiting villages. By September, seven villages: Al Asfur, Al-ata'a, M'zareej, Hadhood, Al-Jawasim, Albu Nahidh, and Albu Khnaifis, had been visited by these health units, which provided primary healthcare services such as vaccinations, early diagnosis of chronic and serious diseases such as tuberculosis. They also conducted health campaigns to raise awareness and educate residents on such issues as epidemic diseases and the importance of hand cleaning and safe disposal of human and animal waste.

"The SDIP, developed in cooperation with *GSP/Taqadum*, has offered us the opportunity to use our available resources to extend our health services to many remote areas which would not have been able get these primary health services for a minimum of five years," said Diwaniyah's Health Directorate's Follow-up section manager, Dr. Betool Ali Atiya, a very active participant in this campaign.

Diwaniyah's Directorate of Health is continuing this health campaign and plans to provide healthcare services to more remote villages.

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## SUCCESS STORY

### GSP/Taqadum's Phase II Streamlining Process Trainings Germinate Sustainability



GSP/Taqadum Senior Organizational Development specialist, Mr. Besman Al-Jubori, (r) reviewing the practical steps essential to streamlining processes of citizen-centered functions related to services.

***For example, a current process to obtain the required permits to build a new home might include 10 steps and require the citizen to produce several documents. This process might not be understood or even known by the citizen. In the streamlining process, the steps might be reduced or reorganized to reduce time, depending on the results of their analysis. Once the steps are streamlined (time-saving and reducing effort), they are shared by all provinces for adoption and are made public (or transparent) via a government outreach campaign, and in some cases, placed online for easy access. The ability to apply for such permits online eliminates human interaction and thus works to reduce corruption. Equally important, such ease and transparency help to increase citizen confidence in local government.***

It is no secret that providing people with technical training is akin to spreading seeds. Each person trained receives valuable information and empowering support, which not only grows their skill set and work capacities, but also their confidence. This, in turn, tends to increase motivation and ultimately, a desire to share this newly learned knowledge with others – thus spreading seeds of their own. No one gets more excited than *project* staff when they see the fruit of their labor replicated throughout the provinces. This becomes the core of sustainability, and is the foundation and inspiration that supports GSP/Taqadum's work.

On November 15-16, Babil's Education Directorate launched an initiative to adopt GSP/Taqadum's Process Mapping Tool by hosting a two-day Process Mapping workshop for 15 members (1 female, 14 male) of the province's Health, Education, Sewage, Municipalities, and Municipality process mapping committees. The person leading the training was none other than Babil's Health Human Resources manager, Mr. Emad Abbas.

Mr. Abbas had attended one of two back-to-back GSP/Taqadum Phase II Streamlining Processes training workshops in Erbil (October 31-November 1, and November 2-4; WR D363). This set of workshops was complementary to the first set of workshops on process mapping of citizen-related functions. Led by the project's international organizational development (OD) expert, Mr. Osama Mahmood, participants were presented with the following: 1) a review of the practical steps essential to streamlining processes for citizen-centered functions related to services; 2) a review of improved process maps that were developed by participants based on earlier process mapping workshops held in August 2015; and 3) an explanation of the concept of streamlining these functions to better improve delivery of services.

As a result of the Erbil workshops, Mr. Abbas joined the other participants in gaining the skills and knowledge to streamline the processes involved with providing citizen-centered services. Inspired by what he had learned, and confident, thanks to the pre- and post-workshop support given to him by project staff, Mr. Abbas successfully conducted Babil's Process Mapping training – both sharing the information with others, as well as training them to conduct such trainings themselves.

On day one, Mr. Abbas provided participants with an overview of GSP/Taqadum's sub-process; improvement and streamlining concept; and process and updating controls. On day two, participants were divided into groups according to their directorate, with each choosing a specific service and its related activities, and proceeded to map its process. Using GSP/Taqadum's methodology, which had been outlined during the project's Phase II Streamlining Processes trainings Mr. Abbas had attended in Erbil, participants now have the capacity to not only review and correct the processes related to the implementation of services, but also to improve and streamline the procedures or steps citizens need to take in order to access services.

For example, a current process to obtain the required permits to build a new home might include 10 steps and require the citizen to produce several



documents. This process might not be understood or even known by the citizen. In the streamlining process, the steps might be reduced or reorganized to reduce time, depending on the results of their analysis. Once the steps are streamlined (time-saving and reducing effort), they are shared by all provinces for adoption and are made public (or transparent) via a government outreach campaign, and in some cases, placed online for easy access. The ability to apply for such permits online eliminates human interaction and thus works to reduce corruption. Equally important, such ease and transparency help to increase citizen confidence in local government.

On November 17-18, a similar scenario took place involving two other recipients of *GSP/Taqadum's* Phase II Streamlining Processes trainings held in Erbil. Baghdad's Water directorate's Human Resource Manager, Mr. Luay Najem, and Governor Adviser, Mr. Hatem Khalaf co-conducted the very first process mapping training offered to Baghdad's Governor's Office (legal, financial, administrative, and technical), Water, Sewage and Municipalities directorates – using *GSP/Taqadum's* approach.

On day one, Mr. Najem, gave a presentation to the 23 participants (5 female, 18 male) where he defined: 1) the organizational work system and its stages, services, and processes; 2) the stages of continuous improvement (Dimming cycle); 3) the importance of process mapping; and 4) how to actually draw the processes. On day two, Mr. Khalaf provided a detailed presentation on how to complete the *GSP/Taqadum*-developed organizational system form and use it to map out processes of services directly requested by citizens from directorates, the Provincial Council, and the Governor's Office. As in Babil, participants were divided into groups reflecting their directorates with each drawing a process map of a specific service.

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## SUCCESS STORY

### Najaf's School Building Shortage on the Mend Thanks to GSP/Taqadum's SDIP Approach



To date, with supplemental funding received from UNICEF, two schools have been constructed in Najaf's Al Radawia region (classified as "vulnerable"), and construction is underway on a third. An estimated total of 930 students have since benefited as a result of this construction.

***"After we identified, with the assistance of GSP/Taqadum's SDIP process, the shortage of school buildings that has resulted in suffering due to overcrowded numbers of students due to financial shortages in Najaf's Governor's Office and Education directorate, we decided to use the resource assistance made available by UNICEF to build this new type of school, said Education Department Planning Manager, Mrs. Dunia Al Turaihi. "I thank GSP/Taqadum's SDIP approach in identifying the gaps and encouraging us to use available resources in this time of financial shortage crisis. The project helped us to have better vision of what we needed and how to solve these problems."***

Historically, Iraqi parents have prided themselves on educating their children, which had resulted in high literacy rates. After a decades-long literacy campaign, illiteracy rates had dropped to 20 percent by 1987. Today, due to years of sanctions, wars, and ongoing violence, it is estimated that 30 percent of the rural population (an est. five million Iraqis) cannot read or write. According to UNESCO, included in this number are "14 percent of school age children currently out-of-school as they have no access to suitable schooling or are obliged to contribute to household income. Overall, 22 percent of the adult population has never attended school, and only nine percent of adults have completed secondary education. Significant gender disparities are also a matter of concern with illiteracy rates reaching higher than 47 percent among women in some areas."

As part of GSP/Taqadum's Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) approach, which identifies both short- and long-term solutions aimed at providing citizen-centered services throughout Iraq's provinces, Najaf was able to identify a shortage of school buildings as a need. A gap analysis, developed in cooperation GSP/Taqadum, clearly indicated a 35 percent gap in the coverage of school buildings across the province. An incredibly high number, once this percentage was identified it immediately caught the attention of local education department officials who moved quickly to reconcile the shortage.

As a short-term solution, it was decided to direct efforts toward constructing trailer-type, (known in Iraq as "caravan") school facilities. Due to the budget shortage, local government officials started a search for donors to fund the schools' construction. To date, with supplemental funding received from UNICEF, two schools have been constructed in Najaf's Al Radawia region (classified as "vulnerable"), and construction is underway on a third. An estimated total of 930 students have since benefited as a result of this construction.

"After we identified, with the assistance of GSP/Taqadum's SDIP process, the shortage of school buildings that has resulted in suffering due to overcrowded numbers of students due to financial shortages in Najaf's Governor's Office and Education directorate, we decided to use the resource assistance made available by UNICEF to build this new type of school," said Education Department Planning Manager, Mrs. Dunia Al Turaihi. "I thank GSP/Taqadum's SDIP approach in identifying the gaps and encouraging us to use available resources in this time of financial shortage crisis. The project helped us to have better vision of what we needed and how to solve these problems."

Parents were also quick to thank GSP/Taqadum's supportive efforts, saying these new buildings have saved their children from having to travel to distant areas to attend school – a situation that caused many to drop out of school entirely.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/education/literacy-non-formal-education/>

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## SUCCESS STORY

### GSP/Taqadum's e-Communication/Tracking Workshop Highlights Wasit's e-Governance Successes Soon to be Replicated Throughout Iraq



GSP/Taqadum Senior Service Delivery specialist, Mr. Dheyaa Ajib (I) highlighted important services the e-Communication systems are providing, as well as challenges faced by the local government during the systems' implementation that can be avoided as other provinces develop and install similar systems.

**Explaining that it was almost two years ago when a committee was formed to implement e-Governance applications that would streamline, expedite and facilitate the routine procedures aimed at saving time, cost and effort, Wasit's Governor Assistant for Services and Chairman of the Electronic Committee, Mr. Nabeel Shammah, thanked GSP/Taqadum and Wasit's information technology (IT) team, for "their coordinated and outstanding efforts in achieving these goals and implementing Iraq's first e-Communication and e-Tracking systems."**

Since 2011, GSP/Taqadum has promoted the use of information technology such as Sub-Legislation Implementation Tracking (SLIT) system and the Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) database. In 2014, Wasit requested related *project* technical support, which led to the province's establishment of a government-based e-Communication system. In response to Wasit's desire to track the implementation status of various provincial projects, GSP/Taqadum continued cooperative efforts with officials, which resulted in the development and implementation of an online tracking system that monitors projects under construction, as well as the implementation of short- and long-term solutions identified via GSP-Taqadum-developed strategic Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs).

In what used to take weeks and even months, Wasit's e-Tracking system enables immediate conveyance of information from the government to its citizens and vice versa. It also informs decision makers with detailed information regarding service improvement plans, *project* (solution) implementation, and reasons behind project delays. Not only can citizens now access information on existing projects such as completion percentages and disbursed expenditures, they can also express related personal views and complaints. All of this fosters public participation and transparency.

Supporting the sustainability, as well as replication of Wasit's e-Systems throughout Iraq, on January 4-5 in Erbil, GSP/Taqadum hosted a two-day "Application of Electronic Government Systems to Improve Service Delivery" workshop for 25 (1 female, 24 male) representatives from Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa, and Salah ad Din. Participants included Wasit Governor Assistant for Services, Mr. Nabeel Shammah; Kirkuk Governor Assistant for Technical Affairs, Mr. Ali Hummadi Abid; Baghdad First Deputy Governor, Mr. Jassim Mohan Al-Bakhati; and Anbar Governor Technical Assistant, Mr. Jassim Al-Dulaimi.

GSP/Taqadum acting Chief of Party (COP), Mr. Alaa Al-Hakak, kicked off the event by giving a briefing on the *project's* cooperative activities to date, with provincial governments, assisting them to become more responsive to citizen needs by 1) focusing on improving the quality and delivery of citizen-centered services; and 2) preparing them to receive functions and authorities from the three targeted ministries of Health; Education; and Municipalities and Public Works (three out of the eight ministries mentioned in Law 21, as amended); and 3) building their strategic planning capacity.

Afterward, GSP/Taqadum highlighted important services the e-Communication systems are providing, as well as challenges faced by the local government during the systems' implementation that can be avoided as other provinces develop and install similar systems.

Participants were then divided into working groups and GSP/Taqadum staff distributed and reviewed an e-Communication development manual depicting



methods to support development of e-Communication projects in the provinces, including technical, administrative and financial details. Sharing experiences, participants developed *project* implementation timelines and discussed e-Communication advantages.

Explaining that it was almost two years ago when a committee was formed to implement e-Governance applications that would streamline, expedite and facilitate the routine procedures aimed at saving time, cost and effort, Wasit's Governor Assistant for Services and Chairman of the Electronic Committee, Mr. Nabeel Shammah, thanked *GSP/Taqadum* and Wasit's information technology (IT) team, for "their coordinated and outstanding efforts in achieving these goals and implementing Iraq's first e-Communication and e-Tracking systems."

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## SUCCESS STORY

### GSP/Taqadum Supports Building Transparency and Trust Via Two-Way e-Communication Systems: Government-to-Citizen and Citizen-to-Government



*Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) staff members interviewing residents in Samawa's city center (Muthanna) conducting a Citizen Rapid Survey (CRS) as part of one of their scheduled site visits*



**Short-term solutions that require little or no funding but produce the highest immediate impact are identified as "short-term." Solutions that require a greater amount of funding and will facilitate perhaps a better and more lasting final outcome are identified as "long-term." This designation gives the local government time to raise funds to remedy the situation.**

Decentralization can have many advantages, including helping to improve service delivery; encourage citizens to become actively involved in decision making; provide ideas, projects and programs that are needed in order to improve services; and share their opinions with service departments regarding the quality of services they receive. This level of citizen participation is progressively becoming a core aspect of decentralization reforms.

One approach in particular, Service Delivery Improvement Planning, developed by GSP/Taqadum Service Delivery (SD) specialists, helps to increase citizen participation. This approach sees decision makers in the service directorates (Water, Sewer, Municipalities, Municipality, Health, and Education) utilize a Service Delivery Improvement Plan or SDIP that begins with them agreeing on specific set of standards within their sector to calculate indicators that show the current value or "as is" situation. For example, the Water Directorate might stipulate 250 liters of water use per capita per day in Iraq's sub-districts (cities and districts would have different standards because they are expected to use more water) as the standard. Later, when checking the actual per capita usage, it might be discovered that citizens are only receiving 125 liters per day. This difference (250 minus 125) represents what is known as a "gap" in one indicator of water service delivery.

Once this gap is identified, decision makers use the 14 different criteria contained in GSP/Taqadum's Gap Analysis template to determine the reason for this gap. Once the reasons are determined and remedies identified, the remedies are prioritized according to available funding. Short-term solutions that require little or no funding but produce the highest immediate impact are identified as "short-term." Solutions that require a greater amount of funding and will facilitate perhaps a better and more lasting final outcome are identified as "long-term." This designation gives the local government time to raise funds to remedy the situation.

One ongoing and growing GSP/Taqadum success story began when project Service Delivery (SD) Specialist, Mr. Hassanien Malik, discovered that the provinces of Maysan and Ninawa had been advised to utilize servers to create province-wide e-Communications systems and that Wasit had decided forgo their own path forward and purchase its own servers. After evaluating the situation in Wasit, project SD specialist, Mr. Malik advised provincial information technology (IT) staff to utilize "cloud-based" technology, which does not require the use of servers yet is easily accessible, user-friendly, and less costly than servers that require constant maintenance. Not to mention safer when taking into consideration such events as the 2010 demonstrations that saw all records lost when government buildings were burnt to the ground. Cloud-based technology allows for information to be accessed from any location at any time via the Internet. Utilizing a cloud-based system, Wasit information technology (IT) staff was able to facilitate e-Communication between local government entities.

At the same time, GSP/Taqadum SDIP work identified short-term solutions that recommended the use of websites with provincial-based domains, and social



media tools (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) as a way to increase citizen participation. [Note: Please see [https://www.facebook.com/MdyrytBldytAlkwt/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/MdyrytBldytAlkwt/?ref=br_rs) to view the Facebook page created by Wasit's IT staff.] Combining this knowledge while working with Wasit IT staff, Mr. Malik, recognized the potential to take a next step and create a greater level of communication that would include two-way communication between citizens and government using social media via service delivery directorate website portals.

Working in cooperation with GSP/Taqadum, Wasit created an e-Monitoring system on the newly-established Wasit .iq domain, where both government officials and citizens can track the progress of various projects, either proposed or in the process of being implemented, as well as offer their comments and opinions via a "Citizen Feedback" portal. This facilitates government transparency and accountability, which ultimately will foster a growing sense of trust between citizens and government officials.

There is no doubt that SDIPs have contributed to an increase in participatory mechanisms, thus improving overall governance and service delivery. In addition, the use of SDIPs has underlined the importance of sharing information with the public, thus making citizenry a partner in service delivery. In the seven provinces that currently implement SDIPs, seven directorates have established website domain accounts. Seven others with previously established websites have since made improvements to them that have made them more interactive with the public. In addition, the five new Southern provinces where GSP/Taqadum has begun the strategic SDIP process have started to consult the public *while their SDIPs are being drafted* - as opposed to showing them the results only once the solutions have been implemented. Citizens are now welcome and invited to add their opinions and ideas to service department discussions that determine short- and long-term solutions aimed at improving service delivery.

Since its inception in 2011, GSP/Taqadum has focused on raising the level of government transparency and accountability, and highlighted the institutionalization the work of provincial systems, specifically with regard to the monitoring and oversight of the delivery of services, and encouraging citizen participation in oversight activities. GSP/Taqadum has also supported provincial establishment Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) units that perform site visits and check the quality of services provided to citizens by applying Citizen Rapid Scan surveys (CRS). CRS surveys of underserved neighborhoods is one of the tools underlined by GSP/Taqadum as yet another means of measuring citizen satisfaction levels regarding government services, as well as promoting two-way communication between citizens and their government.



## SUCCESS STORY

### GSP/Taqadum-initiated Process Mapping and Streamlining of Services Paving Way to Public Private Partnership



Wasit Governor, Mr. Malik Wadi (I) meeting with Information Technology (IT) investment company representatives and discussing use of e-Server (Cloud) technologies to improve and ease citizen access to the provincial service application process. Expressing shock that the province, in cooperation with GSP/Taqadum, had completed mapping the processes of citizen-centered services, they reduced their originally stated fee of 12 percent to percent – a huge savings to the province.

**For example, there are 17 local districts in Wasit. For citizens to receive free or subsidized land from the government, they must go to each of the 17 district government offices and obtain a signed document stating they do not own land before the purchase can occur. Using e-Server technology, citizens will be able to complete an online application form that will be submitted to the Municipality Directorate with the click of a button from the privacy of their homes or wherever they can find an Internet connection. The Municipality Directorate will do the job of collecting the required signed documents – tremendous savings of time, travel expense, and stress.**

Sometimes, in great moments of synchronicity, from one success others sprout. As recently reported, GSP/Taqadum's ongoing work, initiated in 2011, to promote information technology (IT) work is beginning to take a strong hold in the provinces. First to come onboard in 2014, Wasit requested GSP/Taqadum technical support to assist their efforts to expand their government-based e-Communication system into a more robust, multi-faceted one that, among other services, would speed communication between local government entities and track the implementation status of provincial projects. GSP/Taqadum's continued cooperative efforts with provincial officials and IT staff resulted in the development and implementation of an online tracking system that monitors projects under construction, as well as the implementation of short- and long-term solutions identified via GSP/Taqadum-developed Strategic Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs).

As part of this IT work with the provinces, GSP/Taqadum Service Delivery (SD) Specialist, Mr. Hassanien Malik, discovered that the provinces of Maysan and Ninawa had been advised to utilize servers to create province-wide e-Communications systems and that Wasit had decided to forge their own path forward and purchase its own servers. After evaluating the situation in Wasit, Mr. Malik advised provincial information technology (IT) staff to utilize "cloud-based" technology, which does not require the use of servers, yet is easily accessible, user-friendly and less costly than servers that require constant maintenance. Allowing for information to be accessed from any location at any time via the Internet, Cloud-based technology is also safer, especially when taking into consideration such events as the 2010 demonstrations that saw all records lost when government buildings were burnt to the ground.

In addition, with Iraq's internal e-Structure (underground optic cables required for connecting all e-Systems countrywide and enabling server use) nowhere near completion for a variety of reasons (highly expensive to install; security issues; no space left in underground channels used for water, sewer, and electric networks; and high level surface water that calls for the optic cables to be buried deeper than these other network systems), using the Cloud technology was considered the best, most cost-effective, and truly, the only realistic choice given its transparency and the fact that no sensitive information would be transmitted.

In September 2015, thanks to the technical support of GSP/Taqadum SD specialist, Mr. Malik, Wasit's e-Communication and e-Monitoring systems were up and running via its own Wasit.iq domain-based website, complete with a "Citizen Portal" for citizens to enter comments and feedback, as well as social media utilization supplemented by a Facebook page created by Wasit IT staff ([https://www.facebook.com/MdyrytBldytAlkwt/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/MdyrytBldytAlkwt/?ref=br_rs)).

In February of 2016, after five months of successful operation of Wasit's e-Communications systems, Governor, Mr. Malik Wadi, invited GSP/Taqadum SD Specialist, Mr. Malik, to attend a meeting with Al-Baghdadi, an investment company specializing in e-Server (Cloud-based) portal technology. With Wasit representing the only provincial government in all of Iraq utilizing Cloud



technology and showing a high rate of success, the investment company had decided to offer fee-based services (12 percent of all fees collected by Wasit via its portal) to mount all of the provinces citizen-centered services to the Cloud. Currently, in order for citizens to apply for such services as building permits, business licenses, water use subscriptions, and even birth certificates, they are required to visit several government offices bringing along signed documents gathered at each and pay a series of fees in long, drawn out and time-consuming processes. These processes leave citizens exposed to bribes (to speed the process), multiple fees, excessive travel expenses, and a loss of time better spent at work or with family.

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During the meeting with Governor Wadi, the e-Server project was presented as having three components: 1) Financial; 2) Technical (identified as the easiest); and 3) Administration, identified as the most difficult because it involves: a) compiling a list of all the services offered by the province online, b) process mapping and streamlining the processes of each service being offered, and c) the collection of the functions involved with each service. Of these, process mapping and streamlining is the most challenging, expensive, and time-consuming since it requires diverting a large number of directorate service staff from their normal tasks to assist the investment company efforts over an extended period. According to the investment company representative, their 12 percent fee represented, for the most part, the processing mapping and streamlining effort involved with preparing services for online access.

When SD Specialist Mr. Malik explained that GSP/Taqadum had worked with the directorates of Education, Health, and Municipalities and Public Health and completed the process mapping and streamlining of all the citizen-centered services offered in Wasit, the investment company representative expressed shock and amazement and immediately reduced the offered fee from 12 to seven percent. This five percent reduction represents huge savings, not to mention revenue generator for Wasit. Although the province does not charge any fees for its online services, the provincial government is currently reviewing legislation that would allow it to levy such fees.

Excited by the prospect of utilizing e-Service technology to ease the service application process for citizens and generate revenue for the local government, Governor Wadi thanked GSP/Taqadum for its ongoing support and said he would write an administrative letter to complete the deal with the investment company.



## SUCCESS STORY

### Babil Educators and Parents Roll Up Their Sleeves and Refurbish School in the Face of Budget Gap



As part of GSP/Taqadum's Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) work, done in ongoing cooperation with Iraq's provinces, Babil was able to identify the need to rehabilitate the Safi Al Deen Primary School in central Hillah. Budget shortages within the Education Directorate saw a shortfall in the amount of funding allocated to make the repairs, and only major ones were completed. Inspired by this assistance and seeing the need, the school's teachers, staff and headmaster came together, pooled resources, purchased supplies, rolled up their sleeves, and began to make repairs themselves.



**"We are all taking from our salaries to provide a better educational environment for our students," said teacher Alaa Al-Laban. "We are looking forward to receiving support from the Governor's Office to continue restoring our school so it will provide a better learning environment for our students, as well as a better teaching and working environment for teacher and staff."**

During its 1970-1984 "Golden Years", Iraq's educational system was recognized as one of the best in the region boasting of exceptionally high literacy, access, and gender equality rates. Slowly degraded by decades of war and economic sanctions, the quality of education in Iraq today is in a sorry state. Redistribution of funding, political wrangling, and an ailing economy has seen resources diminish, which in turn, has added to further decay of the system's already heavily damaged infrastructure. In many schools, the physical infrastructure has so deteriorated that it has an increasingly negative effect on the quality of education and attendance rates. Displacement of tens of thousands students and staff due to ongoing violence has caused children, especially those from marginalized populations such as the disabled and girls, to become completely cut off from formal education. Where children are able to get to a school, they are met with decaying and conflict-damaged buildings, and a lack of basic teaching materials and supplies.

As part of GSP/Taqadum's Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) approach, which identifies both short- and long-term solutions aimed at providing citizen-centered services throughout Iraq's provinces, in February 2015, Babil was able to identify rehabilitating the Safi Al Deen Primary School in central Hillah as a need. Budget shortages within the Education Directorate, due to Iraq's ongoing economic crisis, saw a shortfall in the amount of funding allocated to complete all that was in need of repair and rehabilitation. With the school providing three shifts per days, the rehabilitation was deemed as urgent. By May 2015, major items such as the school's 200 sq meter roof, 500 sq meter grounds – including sidewalks; and three sanitation systems – including the flushing of each entire system, refurbishing of the bathrooms, replacement of pipes, had been rehabilitated. Yet, other items and the general condition and appearance of the school remained in a state of deterioration and disrepair due to the lack of funds.

On March 9, 2016, GSP/Taqadum Service Delivery Specialist, Mr. Laith Falah, visited the school along with the members of the Education Essential Service Delivery Oversight (ESDO) Unit, and USAID Field Monitor Mr. Ayman Attiya. What they found was astounding. Concerned about how the appearance of the school with its deteriorated walls, ceilings, desks was not only negatively affecting teaching, but also the spirit of the staff and children attending, the teachers and staff, assisted by the school's very proactive headmaster, pooled resources and efforts and renovated the school by themselves. Not only was the main entrance to the school, and several walls and ceilings repainted with bright colors, the main meeting hall had been renovated and student desks repaired thanks to funds donated and collected by the headmaster and teachers, who had also reached out to parents and asked they contribute as well. Just a beginning, since much more work is needed, the headmaster, teachers, and staff are planning a parent meeting to show the before and after results and encourage parents to join in their efforts. This includes reaching out to the Education Directorate, the Governor's Office, and the community at large and asking for their assistance – whether volunteering their time and expertise or donating funds and/or materials. The Provincial Council Education Committee and Deputy Governor have been invited.